

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

PRESENT: Doug Sweet (Acting Chair), Jane Brown, Rob Caruso, Lucie Chansky, Herb Cole, Jini Fairley, Linda Hiller, Rosemary Larking, Girard Plante, Heather Platt
REGRETS: Jeff Hutter, Barbara Lischinsky, Jason Rosenberg, Janna Zwerner
STAFF: Beverly Droz
GUESTS: Sheldon Brown

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The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm and was chaired by Douglas Sweet, Acting Chair.
All were welcomed.

The minutes of the 7/16/07 meeting were accepted.

CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for Sept. by Lowell

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Lowell was not present for this meeting but any discussion that took place is noted below each appropriate bullet item and will start with the words "It was noted".

- Police Headquarters Annex Access Ramp (Project CD0203A. Expended, \$251,768) – The project is complete.
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$19,813) – The Committee has voted and we have requested the installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot Streets, Beacon and Chestnut Streets, and Adams and Watertown Streets. Estimated hardware costs for each of these three intersections is \$1,400. Regarding the intersection of Centre Street @ Centre Ave., we are hoping to pool our CDBG access funds with the Newton Corner CDBG neighborhood funds to improve the pedestrian crossings at this intersection. The neighborhood advisory committee will probably hire an engineering firm to recommend specific improvements. Our hope is to have independent crossing signals for the two streets and straighten the crosswalk across Centre Street. The intersection would be best served by Polara Navigator signals because of ambient sound control and beaconing capabilities. There is also a real need for audible pedestrian signals at Washington Street and Commonwealth Avenue. National Development and Newton-Wellesley Hospital have contributed at total of about \$90,000 to improve that intersection. The Board of Aldermen has asked for design recommendations from a consultant, VHB Engineering. *The Accessible Pedestrian Signals project remains 'on hold' because Engineering continues to insist that they have insufficient funds to pay for installation costs in the coming year. (Expected Date of Completion: none.)*
It was noted that Lowell's cover-email stated that there doesn't appear to be any budging on the part of the City with regard to the installation costs for accessible pedestrian signals, due to budget constraints across the city. There was discussion about some of the intersections that need to have APS. Bev and Doug will follow up with Lowell to determine if we should set up a meeting with DPW Commissioner Turocy.
- Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$0; Committed, \$10,000; Budget balance, \$0) – This project is a joint project using CDBG funds and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. Our portion of the project is almost complete. DPW has constructed an asphalt walkway providing an accessible route from the park entrance on Kilburn Street, past the basketball and tennis courts, then to the

park entrance on Princess Road. The part of our project that remains unfinished is the construction of the area where two benches will be installed. *The CPA portion of the work was delayed because of disagreement among residents regarding the location of additional walkways in the park. (EDC: November 2007)*

- Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – *No change*. The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when our construction of walkways in the park is completed. (EDC: October 2007)

- Curb Cuts (Project CD0803G. Expended, \$0; Committed, \$155,000; Budget Balance: \$2,829) – The Dept. of Public Works has begun work on this project with a dedicated crew that will be concentrating on CDBG projects, primarily curb cuts. We have submitted specific requests for 53 curb cuts. Eight additional curb cuts are being constructed as part of raised intersections on Woodland Road at Lake Avenue and Cheswick Road. We will contribute \$5,000 to the City's cost for these curb cuts. Many of our other locations are on Woodland Road from Hancock Street to Windermere Road. We are still expanding our list of curb cuts to be done in 2007. Mayor's Committee members are still encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. (*Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.*)

- Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$9,168; Committed, \$30,000; Budget balance, \$28,882) – The first project completed under this budget was the construction of two sets of stairs in Burr Park by DPW and the installation of railings on all three sets of stairs in the park. *This project is now completed.*
The second project under this budget is the construction of the accessible walkway from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground. The project is being managed by the Dept. of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Dept. of Public Works. *Work has been completed on the section of the walkway from the school parking lot to the brook.* The remaining portion of the walkway beyond the brook will be completed following the installation of the new play area. There will be approximately \$29,000 remaining in this budget following the completion of the Newton Centre Playground walkway. *We can assign these remaining funds to a public facilities or parks project at any time.* There is a potential long-term request from the Dept. of Parks and Recreation for accessibility improvements at the Newton Highlands Playground and Upper Falls Playground. (EDC: none)

- FY08 Uncommitted Funds (Project CD0803A. Expended, \$0; Committed, \$0; Budget balance, \$86,470) – *This represents funds available for project(s) to be determined.* Because of the on-going need for accessible curb cuts, this budget is a logical source for applying to future curb cut construction. There is also the possibility that more money will be needed if the Committee recommends support for the proposed access projects at the Newton Highlands Playground and Upper Falls Playground [See previous project.]

It was noted that we'll wait until the next meeting when Lowell can make recommendations and we can have further discussion.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS:

Snow Removal:

Bev reminded the Committee that when we met with DPW last spring, it was planned that we'd meet with them again in November, as well as the Elliot Street meeting with the plow drivers. Rosemary is concerned about the parking lots in Newton Centre and the bridges over the turnpike, particularly at Walnut Street. We hear that it is the Turnpike Authority's responsibility. There are designated route lists for the plow drivers and Rosemary thinks these areas should be on them.

Unique Nails Salon:

We sent a letter but did not hear back from them. Bev sent a copy to Lojek (IDS) last week and will follow up to try to find out if he knows anything. Meanwhile Bev will also send a follow-up letter to the salon.

Citizen's Bank on Centre St.

Rosemary reported the window was not staffed and the pullout tables still do not have the universal logo. We'll ask Lowell to follow up.

Bank of America (corner of Centre & Beacon Sts.):

Rosemary reported that she can get into cubicle but not into the office. But the office is the manager's office and therefore do not have to be accessible. However, Rosemary states that the cubicles do not allow for private conversations. The bank staff should then provide some accessible space for a private meeting.

Arborpoint at Woodland Station

Girard visited Arborpoint 2 weeks ago for a site visit to see how accessible it was. He went through the paperwork process and had a good rapport with the previous management. He was told they did have subsidized apartments but then recently told by the newer managers that he was misinformed.

Who provided money to them which would trigger affordable apartments? We're told they received no Federal money. Some apartments are adaptable. The fully accessible apartment was nicely accessible except that for the threshold through the sliding glass door to the porch.

There are 180 Townhouses and apartments. Of these about 30-34 are accessible (½ are fully, ½ are adaptable.) Overall, he thought the grounds were good but he thought the placement of the automatic door openers seemed high. Lucie and Jini are interested, and they will be in touch with Lowell to let the Arborpoint know that the Committee wants to arrange a visit. Lowell would call Ted Tye.

Sand & Water Wheelchair:

Bev reported that Carol Stapleton from Parks and Recreation came by with photos of the Sand and Water wheelchair. MCPD paid for the chair via CDBG funds. Linda reported that she tried it out. She said you have to be supported by the life guards. It can be tipsy if the chair goes too far out in the water. Carol told Bev that the gentleman in the photos was thrilled to experience being able to through the sand and into the water for the 1st time, instead of always sitting at the top of beach on the asphalt. Rob stated that there are other models which are more stable.

Hammond Pond Parkway Condos:

As reported at our last meeting, the elevators at each 6 story condo building at 2, 10, and 20 Hammond Pond Parkway will be shut down for a 13 week period for repair starting this fall. Bev updated the Committee that City representatives and Doug Sweet (MPCD) met with the condo trustee reps on 8/6/07 to discuss what steps they were taking to date, and to address questions to them. Jason Rosenberg had prepared a list of considerations for them as he has expertise in this area and had contacted other buildings which have faced similar situations.

The Trustees had done a "needs assessment" of the residents and had contacted most of those who would have a problem given the elevators being inoperable for about 13 weeks. They held a mid-August meeting for residents and the elevator contractor to help answer residents' questions further. They had already thought of many of the things on our list, such as: having all elevator parts ordered and on locations so there wouldn't be additional delays; planning to have hired help to carry things up & down the stairs; touching base with the Fire & Police departments to be sure everyone was aware of what was to happen; having a helper in the laundry room; continuing to keep residents aware of progress; and much more. They don't have the funds to

pay for 2 construction crews per day in order to shorten the time the elevators are down - these are privately owned condos built back in the 1960's.

Additionally Jason attended the residents meeting with the elevator contractors on 8/15/07 and was very satisfied with the steps the condo trustees were taking. This is what they have to do - the elevators are at a point where they must be replaced for safety sakes. We all know the problems we incur at City Hall with this old elevator. Bev will continue to be in touch with the Trustees, and they know they can be in touch with us. They have been extremely appreciative of our time and of our suggestions. They're also in touch with the Dept. of Senior Services and other departments. But it is a private matter.

HP Space:

Mr. Sheldon Brown, a resident at 384 Linwood Avenue, came to the meeting to request support of a HP parking space in front of his house. Due to his disability he'd like to park in front of his house. The Browns have 2 vehicles in their driveway and it is difficult to keep moving the vehicles to accommodate access to his. There is no parking on the street in front of his house between 8am to 3pm on school days and across the street there is 2 hour parking between 8am to 3pm on school days.

There was discussion about whether or not he and his wife could arrange timing of moving their vehicles so that a space would not be needed. He said they have different work schedules and hers is not always the same. There were questions about him perhaps parking his vehicle on the other side of the street and crossing the street instead of having a HP space. The neighborhood is residential. Lucie doesn't think the HP space can be granted on his side anyway, since it says "NO parking on school days". We'll ask Lowell to check on this. It was suggested that he contact his Alderman if he wants the no parking ban lifted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Guest speakers: It was suggested to invite ISD Commissioner John Lojek and his new staff person to the October meeting.

Linda said Park and Recreation needs a life jacket with the water wheelchair. Linda will ask Carol Stapleton for a budget request. We'll discuss this at another meeting.

Future meeting dates for 2008:

Bev requested that due to conflicts of MCPD meeting dates with Holidays the group review the schedule and set new meeting dates. The agreed upon 2008 date changes are:

January 16, the 3rd Wednesday

February 25, the 4th Monday due to the previous school vacation week

April 28, the 4th Monday due to the previous school vacation week

Lucie reported that the Newton Public Schools were audited by the Department of Education. Lucie said there are many violations. The vocational school at NNHS is not accessible. There are places in the Education Center that are not accessible. There are many civil rights violations. Lucie will email the link to the 100+ page report for Bev to send out. Doug asked if Lucy would make a summary report about the accessibility parts.

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm.

The next meeting will be October 15 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.